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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the implementation of a unit-based instructional method at three child care centers. Two of the centers were Montessori schools and one was a traditional school. The centers were operated by a single corporate owner. A questionnaire completed by the 14 staff members of the 3 centers indicated that there was little year-long planning, scheduling, or use of learning units in the centers. A series of workshops held for staff addressed the issues of the creation of a year-long lesson plan, the use of goals and concepts in teaching, and teacher training. Objectives accomplished by these workshops included: (1) monthly unit studies were created to cover a school year; (2) a list of concepts to be taught each week was created; (3) daily lesson plans were developed; and (4) teachers were trained to use the lesson plans to become more goal oriented in their daily routines. An extensive discussion of existing early childhood education programs and models is presented. A reference list of 21 items is provided. Appendixes include copies of staff questionnaires; lists of unit themes and concepts; forms for recording student progress; and forms for recording weekly and monthly lesson plans. (BC)

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Coordinating Montessori and Traditional Education Through the Use of Units Focused on a Skill Based Competency and Training Staff To Be Goal Directed

by

Carol Childs

Cohort XXXXI

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A Practicum Proposal Presented to the National Master's Program for Child Care Administrators in Partial Fulfillment of the Requiements for the degree of Master of Science

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AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

5-31-91
Date

Carol Childs
Signature of Student

Abstract

Coordinating Montessori and Traditional Education Through the Use of Units Focused on a Skill Based Competency and Training Staff To Be Goal Directed. Childs, Carol A., 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University, Master's Program for Child Care Administrators. Descriptors: Montessori Preschools / Conceptual Educations / Skills / Goal Directed / Traditional Preschools / Early Childhood Education / Curriculum / Unit Study / Concepts

Because a child's development is enhanced by Montessori and Traditional Education, unity can be established by the development of a skill-based competency focused on units.

The author coordinated Montessori and Traditional Education through the use of Units focused on Concepts and trained staff to be goal directed. The document includes Monthly Units and Concepts related to Unit Studies. Each unit focuses on several basic goals. It is to be based on a "hands on" approach, yet give flexibility to incorporate individual teaching styles.

Questionnaires indicated both Traditional and Montessori teachers could work with the guidelines of the units and concepts. Appendices include samples of units and concept goals, forms used to record weekly and monthly plans, and charts needed to record teacher/student progress.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The practicum setting is in three child care centers, owned by one corporation. There are two Montessori centers and one traditional school. The centers are managed by three individuals.

The centers will be described in the following paragraphs, beginning with the largest hereby known as Center A and ending with the smallest center hereby known as Center C.

Center A is a Montessori school and also provides day care from 6:30 A.M. until 8:30 A.M. or until school begins. Child care is also provided after school from 2:30 P.M. until 6:00 P.M. The Montessori equipment is not used during these times. Care is provided for children from two years to six years of age. This center also has a licensed kindergarten program with 12 students working within Montessori classes. The total capacity for this center is 100 students.

The director of Center A managed another center for eight years and is in the third year at this center. The director has very little experience in the area of Montessori; the director's main duties include: enrollment, scheduling, collections and supervising the overall operations. Joint responsibilities with the writer include staff selection and training, supervising corporate financial matters, budgets and planning.

There are eight teachers with varied Montessori backgrounds and two aides. The teachers develop and implement their own teaching techniques within the framework of a general topic; for example, January is the study of winter and they go from there. The school services a wide

cross-section of students both socially and of varied cultures.

The center is located in four bays of a shopping center, each bay having a separate entrance. The office is located in the center between two bays. The director has contact with most of the parents at some point during the day. The classes have mixed ages.

Center B is a traditional school with 35 spaces for enrollment and serves 100 children on a part-time basis. This program's hours are from 9:00 A.M. until 11:30 A.M. for the first group, and 12:00 P.M. until 2:30 P.M. for the second group. It is further broken down into Monday, Wednesday and Friday, half-day groups, ages four and five. There are two groups Tuesday and Thursday, half-day children that are three years of age.

The director of Center B has a four-year degree in art and has been teaching for 18 years. The director has been running this half-day program for 10 for a city recreation department and moved the operation to a bay adjacent to the Montessori school under the umbrella of the existing licenses. This school is in its third year and runs independently.

The director has one assistant and has worked with that assistant for 10 years. The assistant works at the Montessori before-school program.

Center C is a Montessori based program for minority children and is funded by Title XX and Beta. The hours of operation are the same as Center A. It is located in a free-standing building and has a capacity of 45 students. It has only been open for three months and is serving 30 students.

The director transferred from Center A and has two neighborhood assistants, each with their in-service certificate to teach preschool. The director has worked with the writer for 10 years and is very willing to carry through with the policies set by the writer. The other two directors are very independent.

The writer is the president of the corporation. The writer entered the field in 1972 working first with two-year-old children. The writer traveled to Holland and Germany in 1979 to study under the Montessori Family, concluding the Montessori environment is a primary way to self-actualized growth and development. The writer continued her formal education and received a State Teachers Certificate from a traditional college and has mixed the two teaching techniques for many years. The writer is scheduled to complete a Masters Degree shortly.

The writer continues to give lectures at colleges and other institutes on behalf of Montessori based education, as well as teaching the 20-hour in-service for the state on a part-time basis.

The writer opened Center A in 1985, Center B in 1988, and Center C in 1990. Visits are made by the writer to Center A approximately 30 hours per week, to Center B five hours per week, and to Center C 30 hours per week. This time includes some weekends and after school hours. The writer handles day-to-day situations when in the building and on Fridays has meetings with the directors primarily to handle money issues. The writer conducts approximately two staff meetings yearly. The directors have regular meetings. The writer has input through the director, but does not attend the directors' meetings. There is a monthly dinner or fellowship activity for all staff members.

Chapter 2

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Statement

Because no goals were set for the year, teachers, students, and parents had no defined direction to work from. Continuity had not been established. No age appropriate skills had been defined. Units had not been identified as a ground from which to build skills. Teachers had not established yearly lesson plans, including age appropriate goals and unit studies to develop skills. The child care centers had no objectives or systematic means of recording skills achieved.

Montessori and traditional education were both sound avenues for educating young children. To establish unity between three schools with one owner, continuity must be established. This process was not limited to establishing a year's lesson plan, but included age appropriate goals, unit studies and workshops to train teachers to use this tool and unite in a common goal. There was no effective guide for the three schools to work from. Attendance was low at staff meetings and workshops. Teachers did units at their discretion and there was no continuity between classrooms or schools, making it very difficult for the writer to know what was going on in school. The writer came from a sound educational background, yet had very little input in the three schools.

Documentation

Continuity had become a focus of concern at the child care centers. A Questionnaire was given to all staff members. The purpose of this

questionnaire was to find out individual planning style and length of time they planned ahead. Teachers expressed a major concern for what was expected of them. The results of the questionnaire were as follows:

Table 1

Information and Concerns
From Teachers

Lesson Plans: 14 staff summary results

Length of time planned for		Schedule Posted	Schedule not Posted	Felt Enrichment supports units (music, library P.E. dress-up)	Concerned about expectations
1 month	1 year				
12	2	3	11	1	13

A staff meeting was held involving all schools. Attendance was better than usual. Teachers expressed concerns about their own growth and development in the field. The meeting was scheduled for two hours and it lasted six hours. The meeting covered unit studies appropriate for preschool and possible skills to be covered in these units. Each teacher selected two unit topics to research and gather materials to share. Another meeting was scheduled in two weeks. (Staff meetings had been very difficult to coordinate and, most of the time, were cancelled by directors.) The need for and benefits from team work was clearly established.

The writer agreed to present Montessori workshops once a week for six weeks and 11 of the 14 staff signed up for them. The writer

felt this response was an indicator of a problem teachers also recognized.

Analysis

In order to have continuity among three schools, there must be a sound base from which to work and regular maintenance focused on the established direction. It was necessary to have goals and units clearly scheduled. Teachers needed to know their age group well and have skills outlined to work on during the unit study.

A survey of 14 teachers expressed a deep concern for what was expected of them. According to Abraham Maslow, people are oriented toward "self-actualization", the striving to realize one's potential. The writer realized the new interest stimulated on behalf of the staff was meeting four of the needs Maslow described. Having the teachers involved with problem solving and training satisfied the need for safety and security. The teachers were now clearer about expectations from management and were sharpening their skills, thus eliminating some insecurities. It also satisfied the need to belong and enhanced their self esteem, allowing more chance for success in meeting the expectations of the writer. The final need in Maslow's theory is self-actualization and, by allowing time in the meetings for teachers to train and share with their peers, this need was also met.

The writer further questioned the problem and underlying reasons by calling a colleague whose school served 250 students and the teachers all had degrees, yet worked for low wages. The director's belief was that teachers teach for intrinsic reasons. The colleague's school was

located in a church and the staff liked serving the community. Again, support was given to the theory that people want to contribute.

No continuity or unity within the schools appeared to be directly related to training and development by the directors and writer. A review of the literature showed that developmental knowledge, defined objectives and acute observational skills were the base from which to develop a quality school. Researchers in early childhood education found that the first six years of life were the most important for learning (Shane, 1969).

Montessori developed a sequential approach, analyzing motor movements that were congruent with the analysis of the child's cognitive development (Montessori, 1964, 1965). Montessori materials were designed to indicate errors allowing the child to make the necessary corrections. According to Montessori (1965), these self-correcting materials promoted successful independent learning and motivated the child to engage in more complex problem solving.

On the other hand, research comparing Montessori preschool education with traditional preschool education was surveyed by Miezitis (1971). Miezitis found that the majority of comparisons revealed no significant differences between Montessori and other preschools on measures of ability assessed on the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA) and Piagetian conservation tasks. Thus, skillful and experienced teachers could choose from their repertoire the teaching technique to employ, according to their professional judgment.

Organizing the preschool around intellectual skills and competencies from such processes as observation, rather than subject

matter topics (Hurd and Gallagher, 1968), could provide a basis for the curriculum of young children. It was the writer's belief that organizing a program around developmental goals and skills rather than activities would lend support to both teaching styles.

In looking closer at this subject, how did one derive a curriculum? It was simply defined as organized experiences provided for children in a school. A review of various sources of curriculum revealed that the goal to be achieved in educating young children was "personal autonomy based on reason" (Spodek, 1970). Developmental theories have also been used as a curriculum source. What a child is at any level of development is to some extent a result of what a culture says that child ought to be (Spodek, 1970). In analyzing the arguments about natural activities as a source of curriculum, one must question the word "natural" and the purpose behind the observed classification of natural.

The primary role of the curriculum was to focus the teacher's energy by providing a rationale for selecting activities for children. The writer took a more practical approach and recruited the experiences of seasoned teachers and combined it with age appropriate developmental checklists. The values and viewpoints of those who designed and implemented most curricula for young children/classroom teachers was largely neglected (Lortie, 1973). Weikart (1971) suggested that children profit intellectually and socioemotionally from any curriculum that offered a wide range of experiences.

Chapter 3

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this practicum created a year-long lesson plan to be implemented in both Montessori and traditional programs, coordinated through the use of goals and concepts, and trained teachers to use this tool. The format of the lesson plan was to allow 75 percent input from teachers.

The practicum objectives accomplished during the ten-week implementation were:

a. Created monthly unit studies for a school year.

b. Created weekly concept headings.

c. Created a daily lesson plan form to be used by teachers to satisfy the unit, competency and goal.

d. Trained teachers to use this tool to become more goal oriented in their daily routine.

Attainment of these objectives was measured by information gathered from lesson plans, gathered from staff. This procedure allowed the writer to gather input from teachers and recognize areas of further training.

e. Staff benefited from meetings and showed professional growth in the area of planning.

Teacher response was measured by a staff questionnaire. The results of this survey, when compared to an earlier questionnaire used in the documentation phase of the project, showed an increase in time used for advanced planning. There was a large increase in the number of

teachers (14 teachers) displaying lesson plans, a moderate increase in the number of teachers (eight teachers) having goals and enrichment activities reflected in more physical education, music, library and dress up areas to support the goals and units. There was a large decrease in the number of teachers (one teachers) who expressed concerns about expectations.

Table 2

Information and Concerns
From Teachers

Concept Planning: 14 staff summary results

Length of time planned for 1 year	Schedule Posted	Curriculum-Conceptual	Enrichment to support curriculum	Concerned about expectations
14	14	14	12	4

Feedback was gathered from the children and charts were kept when conceptual skills were mastered. Questionnaires were used to establish what kind of activity environments teachers intended to create in order to bring about developmental changes in children, and what reasoning lay behind teaching selections. This procedure allowed for variety in activities and an incentive for growth and development of teachers. Attainment of this objective was measured by an increase in the number of teachers attending staff meetings and training seminars. Records indicated the 50 percent turnout increased to 80 percent in attendance.

Chapter 4

SOLUTION STRATEGIES

Existing Programs and Models

There are countless established curriculum programs available for supporting teachers. An early childhood program faces the challenge of choosing a valid and reliable instrument that is appropriate for the individual child and administered by child care staff. It was concluded in a Miller and Dyer (1975) study, "there is no finding of lasting difference attributable to different kinds of (preschool) kindergarten programs, just possibly some interactions effects on the non-cognitive measures that are complex, small in magnitude, and difficult to interpret" (p.169). This is not to say that there were no lasting effects from the preschool educational programs. The preschool child, in addition to developing cognitively, is also constructing his or her own theories about self and others. It remains to be seen whether one could or wishes to measure the effects of preschool on these other aspects of the development of the young child. It would be important to remember that home environment is an influential factor in any child's achievements.

It has been observed that Montessori education suits the aspirations of many parents, particularly those concerned with academic achievement and self discipline. Phillips (1980) has also noted that the popularity of Montessori schools has risen in conjunction with more authoritarian modes of parenting. In response to research evidence, Chattin-McNichols (1981) has concluded that:

> it seems important to begin to assess the effectiveness of the Montessori system in terms of goals of Montessorians, rather than measures of general academic progress or cognitive development. Goals which would probably be accepted as important by most Montessorians include autonomy, each child's sense of success in academic areas, self concept, an understanding of mathematical and geometric concepts, and the development of a worldwide perspective on cultural subjects such as history, geography and social studies. (p.65)

Rambusch (1978) has made a withering criticism of Montessori education. It is, she says, "based on an act of the heart, conversion, rather than an act of the mind, persuasion" (p.5). The heart of the matter is this: Montessori teachers are inadequately trained to be today's standard of teacher education. The Montessori teacher does not have to have a teaching credential from a state authority or formal education after high school. Child development theories and methodology are not taught in the Montessori education process. Courses usually studied in a regular teacher education program, such as child development, educational psychology, sociology, curriculum development, special education and multicultural education are not taken by most Montessori trainees.

There are two principal training programs recognized for Montessori teachers in the United States, and these are related to the organization with which the training program is affiliated (Simons, 1980). Affiliates of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) are approved by AMI by its Amsterdam headquarters. There are ten training sites in the United States. Courses typically run from nine to 11 months. The second training program is American Montessori Society (AMS). It is growing in availability and recognition. Seminars and

training programs are held throughout the U.S. and available through correspondence courses and proof applicant has an adequately supplied center from which to work. Most Montessori courses cost between two thousand and five thousand dollars.

The content of the course work is based heavily on Montessori's own writing, especially The Absorbent Mind (1961), The Discovery of the Child (1858), and The Secret of Childhood (1959). These works, written between 1936 and 1949, embrace the essence of Montessori's ideals; a mixture of philosophical and psychological statements. In many respects she was ahead of her time, but as Phillips (1977) points out, the Montessori scientific approach is intermingled with mysticism and sentimentalism. "There are many metaphysical assumptions mixed with her scientific pedagogy" (p.63).

It is clear to an observer that a Montessori classroom looks, sounds and feels quite different than a traditional preschool classroom. This section examines some areas that origin is attributed to Montessori's approach. Modern Montessorians state that important features of their approach is the "prepared environment" and strategies of individualized instruction. The rooms are divided into learning stations; the work is arranged and is didactic by nature, simply meaning the work is self-correcting; the shelves are coded by color so the children can easily recognize where they must be returned to the shelf.

The cornerstone on which all other Montessori principles rest is respect for the child. Montessori said,

> As a rule, however, we do not respect children. We try to force them to follow us without regard to their special needs.

> We are overbearing with them, and above all, rude; and when we expect them to be submissive and well-behaved, knowing all the time how strong is their instinct of imitation and how touching their faith in and admiration of us. They will imitate us in any case. Let us treat them, therefore, with all the kindness which we would wish to help to develop in them. And by kindness is not meant caresses. Should we not call anyone who embraced us at the first time of meeting rude, vulgar and ill-bred? Kindness consists in interpreting the wishes of others, in conforming one's self to them, and sacrificing, if need be, one's own desire.

Respect is foremost in a Montessori classroom. Respect for each other is taught. Manners are stressed and practiced, as well as respect for environment.

In the classroom, lessons are defined as the children's "work" and it has a different approach than play time. The equipment used by the children is scaled to their size; chairs, tables, toilets, mops, trays and other items used in a Montessori classroom. It is important the children know the room is theirs and they are in control of their environment. (No teacher-used material is stored on their level.) Pictures and bulletin boards are at the children's level, making the children the center of learning. As Maria Montessori said, "... the teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child." Montessori called the concept that children are capable of educating themselves "auto-education". The child who is actively involved in a prepared environment and exercising freedom of choice is educating himself. Choice is a product of discipline and self control. The role of freedom in self-education is crucial. Two obvious examples of auto-education is the fact that young children begin to talk and walk

with no formal education.

It is sometimes quicker, more efficient and more economical to tell or show a child what to do. Think of the things you learned by yourself and the conditions and circumstances under which you learned them. This reflection should reveal the self-satisfaction that accompanies self-learning and the power it has to generate further involvement. (Maslow p.85) In this sense education should become more child-centered and less teacher-centered, according to Montessori philosophy.

Both Montessori and traditional preschools seek to maximize young learning potential by laying the foundation for subsequent learning and social adjustments. They differ in the emphasis they give to the importance of various aspects of social, emotional, cognitive, physical and moral development. (Simons, p.3)

The objectives of the traditional preschool have been summarized by Pitcher (1966). She writes:

> We want to have children get to know everyday phenomena in many firsthand sensory ways, to question thoughtfully and to think for themselves. They need to enjoy the satisfactions of problem solving and learning skills. They need to express their feelings and sense of self through dramatic play, dance, graphic art. We want them to begin to symbolize ideas with pictures and signs as well as the spoken word. We want them to have fun as they play, since play is a young child's natural way of working. (p.491)

The traditional preschool teacher accepts the view that mastery of one's language promotes cognitive growth and academic achievements and initiates activities which directly contribute to children's language and development. The presentation of children's literature, the encouragement of children to verbalize their activities, the

introduction of new vocabulary, the encouragement of children to speak freely in classroom and playground.

Small and large group instruction is another characteristic of a traditional preschool. Learning in groups has definite social and language advantages, as well as being an economical use of teacher time. (Simons, p.14) The traditional preschool uses the playground as a second learning environment. Simons further claims by using the great educational innovators such as Pestalozzi, Froebel, Dewey, Macmilland and many more recent theorists and practitioners, modern preschool teachers have developed to a point where their students are freer than students in a Montessori preschool.

It is the teacher's role that sharply differentiates a Montessori from traditional preschool teacher. In contrast to a Montessori environment where the child is foremost, the traditional teacher engages in conversations that are not directly related to the work, comments on the child's work by offering praise or encouragement, makes friendly overtures to the child as he works, assisting the child with his work, joining in any ongoing activities in order to assist the child in achieving his objectives more fully, entering into the child's conversations, modeling techniques such as blocks or finger painting, and generally initiating an activity that adds an extra dimension to an ongoing activity. This range of activities may occur during any work session in a traditional preschool. (Simons, p.11) The teacher in a traditional classroom acts to enrich the educational climate in an overt way, while the Montessori teacher enriches the environment from which the child will grow and develop, through much time spent observing the

individual child and his interaction in the classroom. Many of the activities in a traditional preschool are for use by groups, having no one accountable for a particular toy and the cleaning up is undertaken by the group at the end of the free period. The traditional teacher sees this activity as a useful lesson in cooperation.

Discipline in a traditional classroom would be by verbal means, perhaps explaining, conciliating, helping children to negotiate frictions, or by direct prohibition or physical restraint in an emergency. (Simons, p.17) Montessori (1914) wrote in respect to disciplining a child who disturbed others: "... we placed one of the little tables in a corner of the room and in this way isolated the child giving him those games to which he was most attracted. This isolation almost always succeeded in calming the child. ... The isolated child was always made the object of special care, almost as if he were ill." (p.103) It is the writer's observation that isolation of "time out" as it is called today is a recognized practice in many preschools. A wide range of variation was noted by the writer on visits to both Montessori and traditional preschools. The definition between these two approaches is vague in observation of children in an actual classroom setting.

After a brief overview of traditional and Montessori education, the writer must take a closer look at the teaching format used in these schools. It is agreed that Montessori has a systematic scheme for introducing and mastering "lessons". It begins with practical life and sensorial lessons and moves into language, math and science after steps have been completed in each area. A sometimes strict plan of action, on the other hand, traditional preschool teachers have a vast number of

suggested programs to follow. The writer has chosen two to critique. Note the inlay of Montessori principles in one of these curriculum plans.

The first is called Day by Day, an Early Childhood Curriculum, by Lesley Hauser Ed. D. (1988) and sold by Child Care Concepts Inc. to local schools. Its purpose is "to provide high quality programming, offering a well-balanced menu in motor coordination, the development of cognitive skills, music, art and drama. An individualized, multi-sensory, hands-on method ensures that each child's learning modality has been nurtured." Montessori, Froebel, Gesell, and Erickson are a few theorists and researchers given credit in this curriculum guide. No age was defined in this curriculum.

Suggested Daily Schedule

7:00 - 8:00	Staggered entry, breakfast, books and table toys
8:00 - 8:30	Fine motor activities; tracking, hole punching, metal inserts (Montessori), drawing and clay
8:30 - 9:00	Morning meeting, attendance, finger plays, movement activities, singing, discussion of the day's events and new concepts
9:00 - 10:00	Cognitive skill development: children rotate in small groups for lessons and independent activities in language and math
10:00 - 11:00	Transition time, snack, wash hands, outdoor play
11:00 - 12:00	Work-Play: block building, socio-dramatic play, art, water and sand
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch and story
1:00 - 2:30	Rest time
2:30 - 3:00	Transitional time: wash, snack and sharing
3:00 -	Outside, independent activities, dismissal.

There is a suggested theme for each week and the curriculum plans are year round. For example, April - fourth week:

Theme: Flowers

Monday: Review what children learned in March. Children act out being a seed. Read the book Daughter of the Earth. (not provided) Create oragami flowers, set up a puppet theatre and of a variety of gardening tools and puppets.

The rest of the week was similar to this format, telling teachers exactly what to do.

The second program suggestions came from Nursery School and Day Care Management Guide by Clare Cherry, (1987), David Lakes Publisher. Their daily schedule was similar in format to the previously mentioned with the exception of goals written after the activity; for example,

Activity

7-9 greet children, teachers do a health check, play - Goal, self esteem, health awareness, personal relationship, comfort and a good start for the day. (p.340)

The curriculum plans fell into three categories, overall long-range plans based on the philosophy and goals of the program, weekly lesson plans based on the long-range goals, from the weekly plans the teacher can then draw daily plans to be posted as a reminder for everyone involved. This goal-directed program had no unit studies or specific concepts from which to guide the teacher. It is described as "... an open-ended program that prepares children to utilize their intellectual and creative abilities in future learning tasks. In order to begin to read and perform other academic tasks, the children must first gather meaning from the world and develop an awareness of concepts." (p.211)

There are many programs in operation similar to these. Some focus on a comprehensive plan for teachers to follow. One such program is

called The Butterfly Series and comes complete with dittos, stories, songs and a parent newsletter.

Kindercare has the largest number of childcare facilities and hired Dr. Joyce Brothers to help develop a program where quality could be controlled. A theme is proposed each month wherein goals and concepts are outlined and each facility uses a program called Once Upon A Time for the younger students and My Backyard series for the older students. The workbooks have been carefully selected to cover a wide range of concepts. According to one facility director, the concepts are carried into other areas in the school throughout the month at the teacher's discretion. This approach offers a comprehensive and concrete means of quality control, yet the freedom to create concept strategies under guidelines of one management system.

Levin proposed a model of accelerated education. The term "accelerated education" is commonly used to refer to a movement that was established by the Bulgarian psychiatrist, Geogi Lozanov (1977). In his clinical work, Lozanov discovered principles that made his subjects receptive to learning. The approach builds upon the use of music, relaxation and visualization techniques and an integration of the use of the two hemispheres of the brain to promote a receptivity to learning. The purpose is to increase learning enjoyment and tap otherwise unused learning reserves through the power of suggestion. (Caskey 1980; Lerede 1983) This is known in the United States as Suggestive Accelerative Learning Techniques (SALT).

Implementation Plan

In developing the four components of a concept based unit plan, to satisfy the first and second phase where themes and concepts are decided, it is recommended to have a staff meeting at the beginning of the school year to decide on topic headings for tne entire year. The writer and staff developed them on a monthly basis, which worked well, but if developed for a longer period, the writer feels there would be unity and direction at a stronger level. The length of the implementation phase is producing favorable results, but is not a long enough period of time to train and develop this practice. Focusing on concepts and goals and allowing for supportive activities to be created will help develop a sound curriculum. Masters were created for unit topics and concepts (appendix) to use as a guide, but are not to be identified as conclusive.

Monthly staff meetings are essential to guide teachers to concentrate on concepts and develop activities to support those concepts on a daily basis. Staff meetings can be fun and a good place to practice and develop the skills needed to teach concepts. Pick a concept; for example, "spatial relations" can be a topic. How would you teach this concept? The resources are plentiful among educators. One teacher used lunch time to have students sit on lunch boxes, hold them over their heads, put their lunch boxes to the side. We found when teaching concepts any age can participate at the discretion of the teacher. The two-year-old group may use nap blankets to teach the concept of "under" and large boxes to teach the concept of "the", and children got "in" the boxes. Concepts are a good base from which to

work and when the entire school is working on the same concept and unit, a sense of team can be developed.

Continuation

A year-long lesson plan can be suitable for Montessori and traditional classrooms, including concepts necessary for the growth and development of children. The child care centers have a lesson plan format calling forth concepts based on units suitable for any teaching style, yet regulated just enough to insure conceptual success. As the program and teachers grow and develop, the lesson plans will act as resources and may someday be published as a unique collection of ways to teach concepts. This comprehensive plan will continue to be a valuable resource for other teachers and directors. Staff involvement in designing the way concepts are taught insures a high probability of effective and on-going implementation. Lesson plan forms will be a permanent part of the center, to be used in the development of conceptual learning based on specific units. These units and concept studies are an important addition to the center's reference materials. Finally, this procedure or elements of this plan might be of assistance in teacher training workshop or through networking. This method of teaching concepts with clearly defined goals would be far better than activity directed days with unclear goals and concepts taught only by chance. A workshop would shed light on the fact that most teachers' days are based on one activity after another just to fill their day. This practicum proves how one activity can build and

strengthen the total child. Organizing a preschool around intellectual skills and competencies, rather than activities, will lend support to both teaching styles. Children will always be active; it is the teacher's opportunity to direct this energy. Maria Montessori once said children under five "do for the sake of doing" and after five they "do for what they can get out of it." There is a tremendous opportunity for teachers to direct the energies of these children into a productive channel. A workshop would provide the opportunity to show how easy and fun it is to use a concept around which to focus your day, challenging teachers to give the children many life experiences to explore a concept.

Chapter 5

RESULTS

A year-long lesson plan was established with weekly concept headings. Teachers are active in developing the style of teaching appropriate from them. Montessori and Traditional preschool teachers seek to maximize young learning potential by laying the foundation for subsequent learning and social adjustments (Simons p.3), yet not asked to use some one else's teaching style.

Concepts and Units were readily agreed upon by most of the educators at the three schools. (appendices 32-34). A checklist was designed appropriate for all ages. The birthdate and entry date are included on the form and this is placed inside the child's folder. Each Friday is a good day to set aside to update these folders and work individually with the children. The teachers could have a notebook readily available and jot down daily accomplishments and these help as a diary for Friday's assessment of the week.

The directors are going over the folders intermittantly with teachers. They simply ask to see how _____ is doing. The maintenance involved in keeping these updated, is of no concern. The form is very simple and information is stored quickly. (appendices 35-37)

The results from the daily lesson plan forms are not so favorable. Teachers were not used to completing lesson plans and struggled in the beginning. Four different styles of recording plans for the upcoming week (appendices 38-41) were tried.

Form 38 was not readily received by the staff. It seemed like a lot of writing and not easily read or understood by parents.

Form 39 was liked by the Montessori teachers but not by the Traditional teachers.

Form 40 was clearer to read. The Concept and Unit were put in the upper left-hand corner and each teacher developed the paper to fit their teaching techniques. It was further broken into a daily planning list, but teachers felt the weekly was best, allowing them to interact and respond to the children. The children set the pace for the day, yet the weekly intended conceptual and unit plan was kept present. The survey and skills charts on the children indicate most teachers were able to stay on track throughout the week.

To aid in planning a monthly calendar was developed with a brief description of the intent for the upcoming month. This was done for the entire school year. (appendix 41) Maintain copies of these papers to compile a book to be used next school year as a reference. The teachers have great ideas on how to get a concept across. The lesson plans are turned in on Friday for the upcoming week. The Directors just started typing a few of the suggestions they especially liked from the lesson plans. Pass them out on Monday with no teachers name on it and the activity with the most votes gets one extra hour off at lunch (which is also nap time and the director covers for her). So far, the teachers are very responsive. This gives a condensed version of some good ways to present concepts and units.

The values and viewpoints of those who design and implement the daily schedules are preserved and the students are offered a wide range of experiences supporting one concept.

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Elementary School Curriculum Council - Broward County Schools, Skills
William J. Leary, Superintendent of Schools
Produced by Graphics Department of School Board of
Broward County, Florida.

Questionnaire:

1. Do you have a long range lesson plan? How long?

2. Are you concerned about what is expected of you?

3. We are proposing a resource library to be available for each unit. Would you use unit kits providing books, discovery objects and suggestions for each unit?

4. Do you think it would be advantageous to work on the same units, to allow us to pool our resources?

5. Would you feel comfortable giving parents our long-range plan, so they may participate in areas in which they have specialties?

6. Can we count on you to support this tool we will be creating?

7. Do you feel the music teacher supports the curriculum?

8. Would a substitute be able to follow the work in your room, should an emergency arise?

9. Is your physical education class based on the current unit?

10. Is your library area supportive of your unit? The school's unit?

11. Is your dress-up area related to our unit?

12. Do you feel there is continuity in our program?

13. How can we improve on making our unit studies better?

14. How can we involve parents in our long-range plans?

15. Please add any comments on the subject of continuity within our classrooms.

Questionnaire/Survey:

Please take a few moments to complete this brief summary. No name is necessary. This information is important in reviewing the effectiveness of focusing on teaching concepts within the framework of units. Please be accurate and frank in your responses. Thank you for your time and input.

In using the Unit/Concept format, have you found that:
(check all that apply)

____ Your awareness of concepts to be taught has been enhanced.

____ You are better focused on skills to be taught.

____ You feel more comfortable designing lesson plans.

Please answer the questions; yes, no, or with a brief comment:

1. Is your curriculum balanced around concepts and units?

2. Do you feel there is continuity in our program?

3. Do you feel comfortable using the concepts based on unit format?

4. Are your lesson plans posted for parents review?

5. Would a substitute be able to follow your schedule?

6. How can we improve on this method of teaching?

Suggested Unit Themes

August - September
Orientation
Physical Self
I Am Special - Emotional Self
Making Friends - Social Self
Senses - Intellectual Self - How We Learn

October
Fall - Nature Study
Fire Prevention
Real and Pretend - Halloween
Halloween - Safety

November
Indians - Past and Present
Pilgrims - Drama
Families
Thanksgiving

December
Holiday Study All Month - Winter Break

January
A New Year - Begin Calendar Study
Winter
Plants and Animals of Winter
Clothing and Sports

February
Manners
Feelings
Community Helpers
Other Important People - Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles

March
Wind
Spring - Babies, Buds and Blossoms
Farm Unit
Zoo Unit

April
Planting
Rain - Weather
Dinosaurs
Circus

May
Flowers - Botany Unit
Mothers and Babies
Transportation Unit Begins:
Land, Sea and Air

June
Olympics

CONCEPTS

Alphabet
Art
Auditory
Body Awareness
Body Parts
Calendar
Classification
Classify
Colors
Comparisons
Counting
Creativity
Decisions
Details
Directions
Discussion
Dramatizing
Feelings
Fine Motor
Following Directions
Fun
Gross Motor
Holidays
Identification
Imagination
Left and Right
Left to Right
Letters
Library
Listening
Manners
Matching
Measurement
Memory
Motor
Motor Skills
Name
Numbers
Nursery Rhymes
Order
Ordinals
Planning
Positioning
Recall
Responsibility
Rhyming
Safety
Science
Seasons
Sensory
Sequencing
Sets
Shapes
Size
Sound
Visual
Visual Memory
Volume
Width

Child's Name: _____

Birthdate: _____

Date Student Begins: _____

\ = introduced

< = working knowledge of skill

X = mastered

Alphabet lower case																								
Alphabet upper "																								
Art																								
Auditory high-low																								
Auditory loud-soft																								
Body Awareness																								
Body Parts																								
Calendar																								
Classification																								
Classify																								
Colors																								
Comparisons																								
Counting																								
Creativity																								
Decisions																								
Details																								
Directions																								
Discussion																								
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Left and Right																									
Left to Right																									
Phonics																									
Library																									
Listening																									
Manners																									
Matching																									
Measurement																									
Memory																									
Motor																									
Motor Skills																									
Name																									
Numbers																									
Nursery Rhymes																									
Order																									
Ordinals																									
Planning																									
Positioning																									
Recall																									
Responsibility																									
Rhyming																									

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Date Student Begins: _____

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Safety																							
Science																							
Seasons																							
Sensory																							
Sequencing																							
Sets																							
Shapes																							
Size																							
Sound																							
Visual																							
Visual Memory																							
Volume																							
Width																							

WEEKLY LESSON PLAN WEEK # _____

CONCEPT(S) _____

_____

UNIT _____

MATH _____

_____

LANGUAGE _____

_____

SENSORIAL _____

_____

SCIENCE _____

_____

ART _____

_____

MUSIC _____

_____

PHYSICAL EDUCATION _____

_____

OTHER IDEAS TO PROMOTE THE CONCEPT(S) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

BULLETIN BOARD IDEAS _____

_____

please use the reverse side of this paper if necessary.

WEEKLY LESSON FORMAT

OBJECTIVES:

MATERIALS:

PRESENTATION:

POINTS OF INTEREST:

CONTROL OF ERROR - DIDACTIC TRAIT:

VARIATIONS

AGE:

VOCABULARY	MATH	LANGUAGE	SCIENCE	ART
	MUSIC	P. E.	PRACTICAL LIFE	COOKING

OUR UNIT STUDY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY

MONTESSORI LESSONS MAKE UP A LARGE PART OF OUR DAY AND OUR DAILY SCHEDULE INCLUDES:ART, MUSIC, SPANISH, DRAMA & P.E.

SCHEDULE FOR THE MONTH OF _____